

Item No. 6.	Classification: Open	Date: 21 December 2020	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		COVID-19 UPDATE Update on Southwark Council's Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan, December 2020	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Jin Lim, Acting Director of Public Health Kirsten Watters, Interim Deputy Director of Public Health	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board considers the implications of the recent COVID-19 surveillance data for Southwark (the COVID-19 dashboard will be presented with the most recent data on the day).
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board receives the update (Appendix 1) from the Outbreak Prevention and Control Executive on the actions taken to prevent, identify and control the COVID-19 pandemic in Southwark.
3. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note that London is moving to Tier 3 restrictions from 16 December, and note the additional restrictions (Appendix 3); and supports the additional activities being proposed in paragraph 32 in relation to prevention and control.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Southwark Council published its Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan (OPCP) on 30 June 2020. In that document, the governance of Southwark's OPCS is established as being firstly Outbreak Prevention and Control Executive (OPCE) and ultimately both the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet. This report to the Health and Wellbeing Board is the third update in reporting subsequent activity and progress pertaining to the OPCS.
5. Since the previous update presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 11 November 2020 both the epidemic itself and the response have evolved.
6. Autumn 2020 has seen Southwark fare better than many other London boroughs with detected infection levels consistently in the bottom quartile. While South East London has likely benefited from lower connectivity levels, Southwark has consistently reported lower rates than many

comparable boroughs. However, over the last 3 weeks, there are noticeable steep shifts with London and Southwark showing increasing incidence, with London now above the national rate. London was until recently in Tier 2. On 14 December, the Secretary of State announced that Tier 3 restrictions would come into force on 16 December.

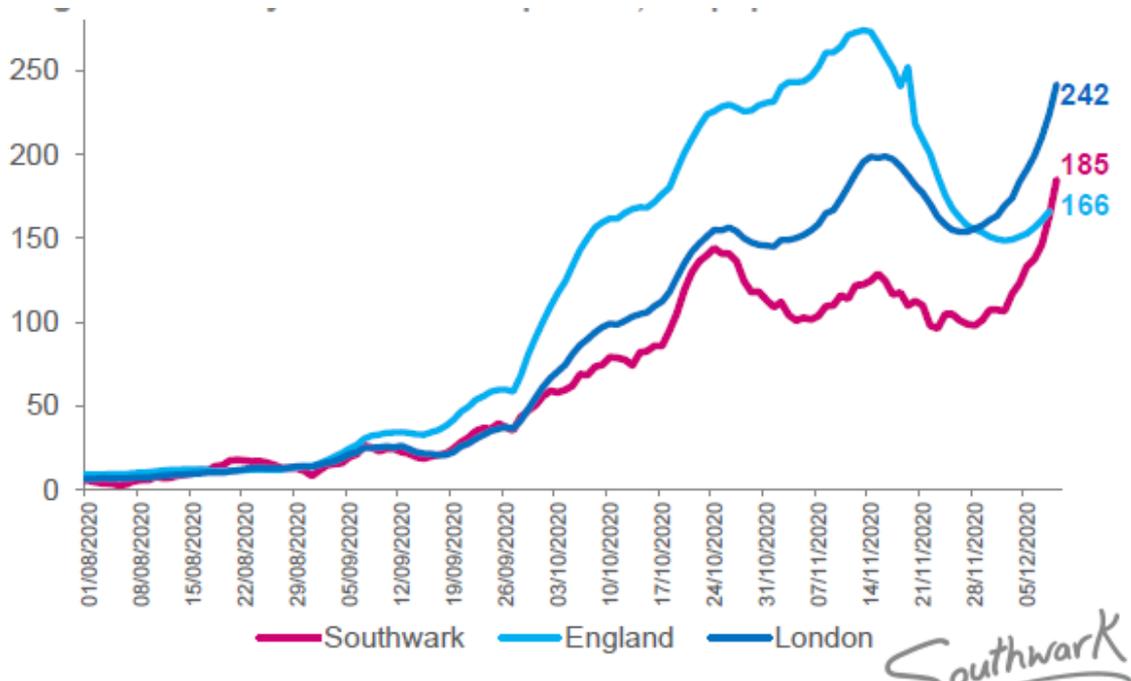


Figure 1 Weekly incidence rate per 100,000

PREVENT STRAND

7. Communications work has been led by Southwark's Communications team with support from Community Engagement, Public Health and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners. A multi-disciplinary team including colleagues from the NHS and Community Southwark meets weekly to discuss local data patterns and behaviours, and adjust our communications strategy and messaging accordingly.
8. Using all our channels and networks we have continued to share key public health prevention messages with residents, staff and businesses, including information about new tiers and restrictions. This information has been targeted at specific groups as required (e.g. younger adults) and translated for distribution within our different communities.

9. We have also worked in partnership with Community Southwark to build a network of Community Health Ambassadors who are being trained to help us reach more residents with our messages from trusted voices in the community. To date we have recruited over 100 ambassadors, and are already benefitting from their local knowledge as we shape our communications going forwards. In response to feedback, the Ambassadors are also being trained in Mental Health First Aid.
10. A Small Grants Programme has been launched alongside the Community Health Ambassadors to support local communities to scale up their work on prevention. Further information is included in Appendix 2. Details on the application process is on the council web pages:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/vcs-covid-19-prevention-grants>

11. Regulatory Services continue with a programme of intelligence led surveillance and both proactive and reactive visits to licensed premises as well as other hospitality and retail venues across the borough, taking enforcement action as required. There are increasing incidents of non compliance and necessary actions are being taken. Concerns include:
 - Increasing riverside congregations and increased social activities with little social distancing at weekends.
 - Large crowd movements from Borough area (up to 80,000) to Druid street, Elephant and Castle, Bermondsey Street and other adjacent areas.
 - Licensed premises offering drink without food contrary to Tier 2 regulations.
 - The operation of shisha bars.
 - The re-starting up of unlicensed music events.
12. In response over the last 2 weeks, officers have taken tougher action and have served twenty prohibition notices and eight £1,000 fixed penalty notices. To date, 6,300 on site interventions have been carried out to ensure better compliance.
13. Work continues with local partners in social care, schools and universities to increase their preparedness, improve COVID-security, and facilitate an appropriate return to activities where it is safe and possible to do so.
14. In collaboration with the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, an organisation-wide online learning package about the COVID-19 pandemic in Southwark will be launched via My Learning Source for Southwark Council staff and partner organizations. This has been produced in-house by the Public Health Team.

15. Plans are currently underway in collaboration with health service partners for vaccine roll out to begin in December 2020. A number of hospital sites including local hospitals have taken delivery of the Pfizer vaccine and programmes are now up and running in vaccinating patients and staff. Care homes have also been contacted to begin the invitation process. The Council and CCG colleagues are working closely to identify community sites for extension of the vaccination programme.

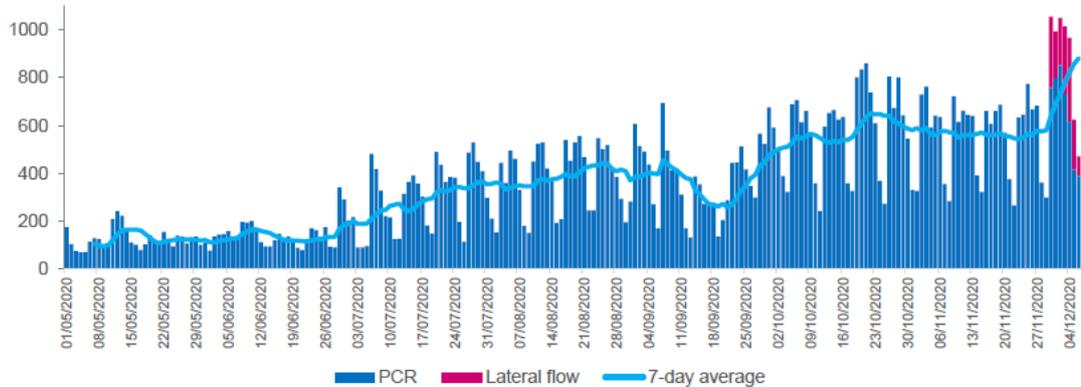
IDENTIFY STRAND (INCORPORATING INTELLIGENCE)

16. The Knowledge and Intelligence team continue to surveil the data and information coming into the council from a range of Joint Biosecurity Centre, Public Health England, NHS and other sources. Daily briefings are provided to the Public Health consultant on call and Director of Public Health.
17. Data for late November showed positive signs of a reduction in confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the borough, and across the country as a result of the national lockdown.
18. However more recent data for early December is indicating that the majority of boroughs across the capital are seeing a steep rise in case levels, and this includes Southwark. London now has a higher incidence than England as a whole.
 - There have been 667 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Southwark in the week up to 10 December.
 - Southwark's 7-day incidence rate is now 209 per 100,000, lower than London as a whole, at 271 per 100,000.
 - Our incidence rate has increased by 77% in the last week, compared to an increase of 53% for London as a whole.
 - Positivity is also increasing, currently standing at 7.6%; lower than London at 9.9%. However testing via our various community pathways remains notably higher, at 10-12%.
 - Cases are increasing in all age groups, mirroring what we see in London, and in communities across the borough.
 - Across London, 29 boroughs have an incidence above 150 per 100,000, with 16 boroughs above 250 per 100,000. Havering has the highest incidence, at 545 per 100,000.

19. Southwark is one of three London boroughs to pioneer a local tracing partnership (LTP) since 21 September 2020. The service is called Test and Trace Southwark (TTS). Performance of TTS (together with national NHS Test and Trace) has maintained follow-up completion performance of $\geq 85\%$.
20. Since the middle of November call centre staff have been incorporated into day-to-day call handling. The mixed model of delivery will continue with Public Health continuing to lead TTS on a daily basis with the overall programme led by the Public Health consultant.
21. Development continues to incorporate a door-knocking capability (working with Environmental Health and Housing) for cases who the local team are unable to reach by telephone alone. There is ongoing use of SMS messaging and there is work taking place to develop a self serve digital form to make case reporting easier.
22. Symptomatic testing volumes have been broadly stable since the establishment of the Local Test Site (LTS) in Peckham Pulse car park. This facility works alongside the Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) located in Burgess Park (3 days a week). There continues to be good capacity at both the MTU and LTS. There is ongoing work to encourage 'on foot' users to attend Peckham Pulse which is more winter proofed than the Burgess Park site. Over the last 4 weeks, over 3,500 people have tested at Peckham Pulse.
23. Alongside the national testing scheme, which provides testing for people displaying symptoms of COVID-19, Southwark has been working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to introduce targeted asymptomatic testing of key populations using rapid (results in within 30 minutes) Lateral Flow Test (LFTs) technology.
24. Population groups are being prioritised where a positive result leading to self-isolation may help protect vulnerable people (such as the recently announced national LFT testing programmes for care home visiting and domiciliary care workers). This will reduce the risk of an outbreak and improve the ability of people to work safely together. Our testing approach will follow national guidelines while being adapted to Southwark's needs.
25. The Public Health team have been working closely with universities and other educational institutions connected with the borough on the deployment of testing approaches to enable students to return home for Christmas 2020. Testing at London South Bank University facilitated by Public Health started on schedule on 30 November 2020. The Public Health team is investigating the feasibility of testing other key groups including special schools and council staff who may be in prolonged close contact with vulnerable residents or staff.

26. The local NHS Trusts have also introduced rapid testing for staff – both clinical and non clinical.
27. Overall testing continues to increase in the borough. Test numbers have increased by over half (52%) in the last 7 days; in 7 days there have been 6,175 Pillar 2 tests in Southwark. This increase is in part due to the introduction of lateral flow testing, with 1,612 tests in the last week.

Figure 1: Daily and weekly average Pillar 2 tests in Southwark



CONTROL STRAND

28. The Acute Response Team (ART) has operated since February 2020, with a seven-day consultant-led service operating 0900-1700hrs every day. The publichealth@southwark.gov.uk is a monitored group inbox that serves as the single point of contact to all coronavirus-related enquiries. The team meets every weekday at 1600hrs to manage situations and respond to enquiries from across Southwark Council and organisations across the borough.
29. The volume of enquiries has steadily risen over the last several months with queries largely emanating from schools, universities and hostels.
30. The ART continues to provide support internally too for the council. The team is working closely with the Health and Safety team and HR departments to support safe working practices within the organisation. Within this package of work, a monthly briefing is provided to trade unions updating them on the pandemic and the health protection response.

OUTLOOK

31. At the time of drafting this briefing, regulatory approval has been given for the Pfizer vaccine. While there is reason for optimism that the morbidity and mortality impact of COVID-19 will begin to diminish from late Spring / early Summer 2021 onwards, there are ongoing pressures on services (including Public Health, regulatory, communications and other council and partners involved in the OPCP workstreams).

32. In the absence of additional constraints or another national lockdown, we would not expect the need for continued OPCR operations to relent before summer 2021. Even with at-scale vaccine roll-out by mid-summer 2021, continued outbreaks of disease will likely continue into the spring / summer of next year. It remains unclear from national government what resourcing will be made available to the Council to support the COVID-19 response beyond April 2021.

33. On the 14 December, it was announced that London will be placed in Tier 3 from the 16 December. Further information on Tier 3 restrictions are included in Appendix 3 of this report. In response to this move, across South East London, work is taking place to develop enhanced actions. They include:

- Enhanced surveillance with a focus on hot spots and cross borough / boundary incidents and shared monitoring dashboards.
- Strengthening messaging for Christmas and New Year festivities with additional information delivered to households, digital communication, social media and outdoor advertising.
- Targeted work through the Community Ambassadors Programme in partnership with the VCS.
- Additional enforcement activities over the holiday period.
- Increasing testing capacity for symptomatic testing (PCR) with additional MTU deployment days.
- Introducing with DHSC care home testing for visitors (in addition to weekly and monthly testing for staff and residents).
- Extending the offer for PCR testing for domiciliary care.
- Further capacity for local contact tracing by on boarding the Council Call Centre.
- Introducing 'visits' for contacts not contactable by phone.
- Piloting SMS and digital approaches to make contact tracing more effective.
- Developing the offer for rapid (LFT) for universities and schools.
- Submitting the business case for further resourcing to DHSC to step up mass testing facilities using LFT across the borough which can support more effective contact tracing, keep residents safe and help a return to reduced restrictions.

Community impact statement

34. The OPCP involves close collaboration with a range of VCS partners and explicitly recognises the differential impacts of the pandemic on different groups. The development of the OPCP and associated activities are informed by the ongoing work on health inequalities and the JSNA on COVID-19 Population Impacts previously received at the Health and Wellbeing Board, 27 July 2020. An evaluation strategy is in development to anticipate the risks for different communities, and to ensure that differential impacts are characterized and mitigated where possible.

Resource implications

35. In the same way that the pandemic has created new resource pressures across the public sector, the work driven by the OPCP has created unprecedented staffing and financial pressures across Public Health, Regulatory Services, Communities and Communications. Additional resource has been made available to these teams using the funding announced by Government to support the implementation of the local Outbreak Prevention Control Plans. There is uncertainty as to what funding will be available in the new financial year.
36. Ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff who have committed above and beyond their duties for more than 9 months is a priority. A sustainable approach that safeguards health and wellbeing is essential as we project the pandemic response into 2021 and beyond.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Outbreak Prevention Control Plan	Public health First Floor, Hub 1 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=365&MId=6771&Ver=4		
Covid 19 and the impact on health inequalities	Public health First Floor, Hub 1 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=365&MId=6771&Ver=4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Update report from the Outbreak Prevention Control Executive
Appendix 2	Community Grants Scheme: Prevention
Appendix 3	Tiers 1, 2, 3 summaries

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	
Report Author	Richard Pinder, Consultant in Public Health Medicine	
Version	Final	
Dated	11 December 2020	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		15 December 2020